

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 AGRE-00 L-03 H-01

OIC-02 SP-02 USIA-06 AID-05 NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15

STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 PA-01 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 COME-00 AF-10 ARA-06 EUR-12 NEA-10 ITC-01

IGA-02 SIL-01 LAB-04 /129 W

-----141543Z 068105 /41

R 140819Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8391

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 5516

PASS USDA

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAGR, PRP

SUBJ: SUGAR: GOP DELEGATION TO ISA MEETING IN GENEVA

REF: STATE 81086

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: CHOICE OF GOP DELEGATION TO INTERNATIONAL SUGAR AGREEMENT (ISA) TALKS DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN STRENGTHENED TO REFLECT IMPORTANCE USG IS NOW ATTACHING TO THIS CONFERENCE. GOP DELEGATION HEAD, AMBASSADOR BENEDICTO, HAS ACCESS TO PRESIDENT MARCOS, BUT MAY BE UNABLE TO ATTEND MUCH OF THE CONFERENCE. IN HIS ABSENCE, GOP DELEGATION WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO PLAY PASSIVE ROLE WHICH HAS BEEN CHARACTERISTIC DURING PREPARATORY MEETINGS. END SUMMARY.

2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: GOP DELEGATION TO ISA TALKS BEGINNING IN GENEVA APRIL 18 IS AS FOLLOWS: ROBERTO S. BENEDICTO, AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN; HORTENCIO J. BRILLANTES, AMBASSADOR AND PERMREP OF PHILS TO UN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, GENEVA; JOSE ALDEGUER UNSON, SUGAR QUOTA ADMINISTRATOR; CONFIDENTIAL

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JAIME DECANAY, DIRECTOR AND GENERAL MANAGER, PHILIPPINE SUGAR INSTITUTE; JOSE ATIENZA, CONSULTANT, ASSOCIATION OF INTEGRATED MILLERS; JOSE Y. MONTALBO, ASSOCIATION OF INTEGRATED MILLERS; EARNESTO ESCALER; EDGARDO YAP, JOSE ROMERO, OF PHILIPPINE SUGAR ASSOCIATION; ISMAEL REINOSO, DIRECTOR, PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK; NATALIO VELEZ, ASSOCIATION OF INTEGRATED MILLERS; ARMANDO GUSTILO, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL

FEDERATION OF SUGAR CANE PLANTERS; NORBERTO ESCOLIN, DEPUTY
DIRECTOR, PHILIPPINE SUGAR INSTITUTE; ATTY. PAGASA SAN AGUSTIN,
OFFICE OF AMBASSADOR ROBERTO BENEDICTO. END UNCLASSIFIED

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: GOP DELEGATION ABOVE HAS NOT, SO FAR
AS WE CAN TELL, BEEN ALTERED AS A RESULT OF BRIEFING REPORTED
REFTEL. DELEGATION IS CERTAINLY WIDELY REPRESENTATIVE OF
PHILIPPINE SUGAR ESTABLISHMENT, BUT HAS, NEVERTHELESS, SEVERAL
IMPORTANT WEAKNESSES. AMBASSADOR BENEDICTO, ASIDE FROM
BEING A WIDE RANGING BUSINESSMAN AND A CRONY AND CONFIDANT
OF MARCOS, IS ALSO AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN, AND, AS SUCH, IS
VERY INVOLVED WITH MARCOS OFFICIAL VISIT TO THAT COUNTRY
SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 25-29. BENEDICTO'S OFFICE TELLS US
THAT HE WILL BE FLYING TO TOKYO TOMORROW (APRIL 15) (MOST
OF THE AMBASSADOR'S TIME IS SPENT OUTSIDE JAPAN, PRINCIPALLY
IN MANILA) AND RETURNING TO MANILA ON TUESDAY. THE
AMBASSADOR WILL CERTAINLY ACCOMPANY THE MARCOS COUPLE
DURING THEIR OFFICIAL VISIT. SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN THESE
OBLIGATIONS, BENEDICTO WILL PRESUMABLY FIND TIME TO ATTEND
THE ISA TALKS, BUT WE DOUBT HIS PRESENCE OR HIS INTEREST
WILL BE SUSTAINED. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, BENEDICTO STILL
HAS THE PRESIDENT'S EAR, BUT THERE IS SOME QUESTION ABOUT
THE WEIGHT MARCOS LENDS HIS ADVICE ON SUGAR. BENEDICTO'S
INFLUENCE WAS DAMAGED BY HIS BAD ADVICE NOT TO SELL SUGAR
IN THE U.S. MARKET DURING 1975. SINCE THAT TIME, MARCOS
HAS NEGOTIATED AND SIGNED THE PARTICIPATING CONTRACTS WITH

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H-01 OIC-02 AF-10 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10
ITC-01 IGA-02 SIL-01 LAB-04 /129 W
-----141543Z 068317 /41

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8392
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 5516

HEADS THE GOP DELEGATION, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT HERE THAT

ANY FINAL DECISIONS ON THE ISA WILL BE MADE BY MARCOS PERSONALLY.

4. IN THE ABSENCE OF BENEDICTO, AMBASSADOR BRILLANTES WILL ACT AS HEAD OF DELEGATION, GIVEN BRILLANTES OTHER OBLIGATIONS IN GENEVA, HE WILL CERTAINLY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO SPEND SIX FULL WEEKS ATTENDING THE SUGAR TALKS. THUS, JOSE UNSON, HEAD OF THE SUGAR QUOTA ADMINISTRATION, WILL PROBABLY SERVE AS DE FACTO OPERATIONAL HEAD OF DELEGATION. BEFORE THE GOP ASSUMED CONTROL OF SUGAR MARKETING, AND DURING THE TENURE OF THE OLD SUGAR ACT, THE SUGAR QUOTA ADMINISTRATION PLAYED A ROLE IN THE PHILIPPINE SUGAR ESTABLISHMENT. THE GOP'S WASHINGTON LOBBYISTS STILL SEEM TO REPORT PRINCIPALLY TO UNSON, WHO REMAINS WELL INFORMED AND ARTICULATE ABOUT U.S. SUGAR POLICY. THE EMBASSY HAS NOT, HOWEVER, BEEN ABLE TO DISCOVER ANY EVIDENCE THAT UNSON HAS ACCESS TO MARCOS OR ANY INFLUENCE WHATSOEVER ON GOP SUGAR POLICY. THUS, WE DO NOT BELIEVE UNSON IS IN A POSITION TO LEAD GOP DELEGATION TO ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE TALKS.

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5. WHILE THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK (PNB) HAS AN ACTIVE OPERATIONAL ROLE IN SUGAR POLICY, NEITHER OF THE TWO MEN MOST DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH SUGAR, DOMINGO, THE PRESIDENT, OR TRINIDAD, THE V.P. IN CHARGE OF SUGAR, ARE ON THE DELEGATION. WE DO NOT KNOW REINOSO, THE PNB REP ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE. NOR DO WE KNOW ATTY. PAGASA SAN AGUSTIN FROM AMBASSADOR BENEDICTO'S OFFICE, BUT FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, IT WILL BE WORTH THE WHILE OF THE U.S. DELEGATION TO TAKE THE MAN'S MEASURE.

6. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF U.S. DELEGATION WOULD KEEP US UP TO DATE ON POSITION AND PARTICIPATION OF GOP DELEGATION IN GENEVA, PARTICULARLY IF POLICY INITIATIVES TAKE PLACE. WE WOULD ALSO WELCOME ANY CHARACTERIZATION OF PERSONALITIES AND INFLUENCE OF VARIOUS MEMBERS OF GOP DELEGATION WHICH WOULD HELP US TO SORT OUT LOCAL SUGAR POLITICS AT A LATER DATE.

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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Enclosure: n/a
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TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, PORC, RP, ISA
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